194 attacked /206/ the fighters. Between dances the participants drink beer
196 brought to the spot for the occasion in order to nourish the invisible beings which they represent.

[262] All the participants also eat a dish made up of peas, beans, groundnuts, rice, manioc, millet, fonio, cooked with baobab leaves and karite oil. This mixture is identified with the spirits' struggle with the clouds which they supposedly swallow at the height of the battle. When the ceremony draws to an end, the chief sends the women and children home and fetches the kwore boli which he swings eighteen times over the square.

In a file, the members of the society return to the tree to "bring back" the Kworè which, while invisible, has been present at all the ceremonies. They circle around the tree singing to the rhythm of the drums. Then they put out their torches and throw them at the foot of the tree along with the whips before returning to their homes.

[752] Their wounds and burns are cared for by their wives with water from the Kworè altar, this medication bearing the name of kwore kane (remedy of the Kworè).

The same dances and the comings out of the mask take place three days in succession. On the fourth day the chief and the elders, all undressed, crawl to the sanctuary for the annual sacrifice offered inside it. The chief gathers the thunder stones collected during the past year and places them in the sack containing the altars which are to be sold.

To "clarify" the mirrors, he pours millet mash over them; he cut the throat of fowls and places kola nut juice over the snake and the ñõ boli; he next fills the ñõ boli with millet previously taken from that of the Komo. With the remaining seeds he makes a mash with which to pour a libation over the sack. He next passes a burning twig of straw over the snake while saying:

"You, snake, you do not fear the fire; you must not fear fire and rain" (1).

1. E ngorongo e ma sira tasuma ne e kana sira sandyi tasuma fie.

The effect of this action is to prepare the snake by means of these burns and to attract lightning whose effects it must not fear.

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791 Raffenel has given us an interesting portrait of one of these Bambara blacksmiths, whom he called father Niany, whose guest he was at Foutobi (Kaarta). He saw him act successively as fa, as priest of the manes and of the guardian spirits of the family, as doctor, and as exorcist. He was always alert, always excited and ever watching for the thousand manifestations of the invisible and hastening either to cooperate with them or to force them to do his will.

752 Here are some excerpts concerning the highly characteristic personage, father Niany:

"I saw a small child die of a snake-bite," reports Raffenel (2); "the poor creature was hideous and swollen up

2. In Nouveau voyage au pays des nègres [A New Journey to the Land of the Negroes], Vol. 1, p. 417.

like a balloon. Its mother had laid it [144] down in a field of millet which she was hoeing. A snake appeared (1) and bit the

[137]

1. "These snakes are 50 centimeters long and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Their back is gray, with very conspicuous black rings around the body. They have white bellies and a flat head rounded at the end. The part nearest the tail is covered on the upper surface by a series of vertical scales covering about a quarter of the length of the body. The tail is much smaller in diameter than the body. They like the outskirts of villages and are markedly fond of the roofs of houses." (Raffenel)

child. The mother misinterpreted its cries and offered her breast. Soon, however, the swelling became evident and the child had died within 24 hours." ....

752 "A few days after the child's death, a woman in the house was also bitten, just a step from my hut and by a similar snake. Old Niany was summoned and came at once. I was not aware that he had any knowledge of medical matters but, on seeing the confidence shown him, I realized that this was not a new experience for him.

"His medication consisted, first, of ridiculous gestures and a spate of incoherent words spoken very rapidly. Then he brought out from under his boubou [robe] a small horn containing a black and oily ointment. The injured woman, who seemed very calm, prepared her own bandage and placed the ointment on the wound, adding some ground root which the old man took from another horn. When she had finished, it was Niany's turn. He muttered some more words, put his finger into his ears and took out some stuff, which was apparently there in quantity, and carefully spread it over the ointment. The woman then arose and returned to her work.

"I watched this treatment with a lively interest since I knew that I myself might have need of it at any time. For the same reason I often asked after the woman and was always told that she was getting on well. On the third day, I was told that she was completely cured and that there had been no swelling or pain to keep her from performing her usual chores.

"The snake that had bitten her was nevertheless of [145] the same type as the one that had caused the child's death. I saw and held in my hands both snakes; I saw the remedy applied and I have faithfully described it. Are we to believe in the virtue of grigri and in the omniscience of the Aesculapius of Foutobi, or must we give an unorthodox twist to the aphorism which says that faith conquers all?

"In any case, I firmly resolved to trust myself to the learned hands of Niany if the need should arise.

"When I went to Niany to congratulate him on his remarkable cure, I reminded him of the death of the child who had been treated in the same way. The singular logic of the blacksmith [811] 's reply has no doubt been encountered before: 'that's not at all strange,' he told me, 'since my remedy cures only those who believe in it and the little child did not believe.' "....

755 hoof or in an ox's horn; these horns and hoofs /46/ are often decorated with cauri, and from time to time the blood of a victim is poured on them. If a disease is a force, a power which torments human beings, the remedy is another force, another power which is opposed to the first and fights against it. In order to obtain the good graces of this second force as well as its efficacy, people feed it with blood. The kana is of general use; it cures all ills a little, and just as each boli fetish possesses a korti, or harmful powder, enclosed in a horn, so also it possesses its kana, or healing remedy. Since there are as many different kana as there are fetishes, and since, independent of these, the sorcerers also have theirs, the kana are legion and cannot be counted. It is impossible to say what goes into the making of a kana, and the Negroes themselves do not know; they know that charcoal powder goes into it, and that is all. A sorcerer of Kolo. n. kolona, much consulted for orchitis, varicocele, etc., etc., uses glow worms dried in the sun and crushed with a handful of wood charcoal.

[752] Wounds resulting from a bruise caused by a blow or a fall are treated by throwing a handful of ashes into them. The ashes are obtained from dry leaves gathered in the evening in complete darkness under trees deep within thickets, and at random and without looking.

To cure a malady called "strained back," one or several snake sinews are worn as a belt. A hen's craw, exposed to the sun for three days and then cut into thin slices and swallowed with all its contents, will develop an appetite for you for the rest of your days, to the point [752] of insatiability. For burns a poultice of rabbit fur and barbs of guinea-fowl feathers is the sovereign remedy.

To treat rabies, the Bambara have no need of the Pasteur Institute or serum. A person who has been bitten by a rabid dog climbs on a nearby bush, a friend comes and cuts it down, the whole thing falls and rolls on the ground, and rabies are no longer to be feared; they are entirely exorcised. A thread on which a cauri is strung, knotted [751] around the loins, protects a child from blackwater fever, and a string with seven or nine knots, called the tafo, when knotted around the neck, will save you from goiter, croup, laryngitis, a persistent cough, etc. The tafo is used in a general way, just /47/ like the kana; it is employed for almost all illnesses, and there is no malady that it